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NOTES ON THE DIALECT OF THE PEOPLE OF
NEWFOUNDLAND.¹

IN recently visiting Newfoundland, I had not more than begun to associate with her people till I observed them using English words in a sense different from what I had ever heard elsewhere. This was the case, to some extent, in the speech of the educated, in their law proceedings, and in the public press, but of course was more marked among the uneducated. Among them, particularly, I found in addition words in use which were entirely new to me. Further intercourse convinced me that these peculiarities presented an interesting subject of study, and during the short time at my disposal, with the assistance of kind friends, among whom I must specially mention Judge Bennett of Harbor Grace, I made as full a collection as circumstances would permit, of words in use strange to me, or used in peculiar senses.

In explanation of the origin of these peculiarities, I may mention that the most of the original settlers of Newfoundland came either from Ireland or the west of England. In consequence, the present generation very generally speak with an Irish accent. But they seem to have adopted few words from this source. From a very early period, the coasts were frequented by fishermen of all nations, and thus may have been introduced words, whose genesis we find it difficult to trace. This influence, however, has been very limited, and their language is almost entirely English. Even the peculiarities which we are to consider will, I think, be seen by the following collection to be survivals of older forms of the language in many cases.

I. We find English words which are either obsolete or used only in some limited sense. We note the following : —

Barvel, sometimes pronounced *barbel*, a tanned sheepskin used by fishermen, and also by splitters, as an apron to keep the legs dry, but since oilskin clothes have come into use, not now generally employed. Wright, in his "Dictionary of Obsolete and Provincial English," marks it as Kentish, denoting "a short leather apron worn by washerwomen, or a slabbering bib."

Barm has now generally given way to the word yeast, but it is still commonly, if not exclusively, used in Newfoundland. So *billets*, for small sticks of wood, has now, with most English-speaking people, gone out of use. But it is quite usual in Newfoundland to hear of buying or selling billets, putting in billets, etc. The word, however, seems to have come from the French.

¹ Read at a meeting of the Montreal branch of the American Folk-Lore Society, 21st May, 1894.

Brews. This is a dish which occupies almost the same place at a Newfoundlander's breakfast-table that baked beans are supposed to do on that of a Bostonian. It consists of pieces of hard biscuit soaked over night, warmed in the morning, and then eaten with boiled codfish and butter. This is plainly the old English word usually written *brewis*, variously explained. Johnson defines it as "a piece of bread soaked in boiling fat pottage made of salted meat." Worcester derives it from Gaelic *brathas*, W. *briw*, a fragment or morsel, and represents it as denoting small pieces of bread in broth. But Webster properly, we think, gives it as from the Anglo-Saxon *briw*, broth, and represents it as obsolete in the sense of broth or pottage ("What an ocean of *brewis* shall I swim in," Beaumont and Fletcher), but as still used to denote "bread soaked in gravy, or prepared in water and butter." This is the relative New England dish. Wright gives it in various forms, *brewet*, *brewis*, etc., as denoting pottage, but says that in the north of England they still have "a *brewis* made of slices of bread with fat broth poured over them."

Child is used to denote a female child. This is probably going out of use, as gentlemen who have resided for some time on the island say they have never heard it, but I am assured by others that on the occasion of a birth they have heard at once the inquiry, "Is it a boy or a child?" Wright gives it as Devonshire, and it was in use in Shakespeare's time, "Winter's Tale," iii. 3, "A boy or a childe, I wonder."

Dresh, to go round visiting. A man said of a minister, "He's na'ar a bit of good for dreshing round." In old English the word is the same with the modern threshing or thrashing. This peculiar use of the word may have originated in the practice before threshing mills were in use, of men going round among farmers threshing their grain.

Drung, a narrow lane. Wright gives it under the form of *drun*, as Wiltshire, with the same signification.

Dwoll, a state between sleeping and waking, a dozing. A man will say, "I got no sleep last night, I had only a dwoll." This seems kindred to the Scotch word *dwam*, which means a swoon. "He is no deid, he is only in a dwam." Wright gives a similar, if not the same word, as *dwale*, originally meaning the plant nightshade, and then a lethargic disease, or a sleeping potion.

Flaw, a strong and sudden gust of wind. Norwegian, *flage* or *flaag*. The word is used by Shakespeare and Milton:—

Should patch a wall, to expel the winter's *flaw*. — *Hamlet*.

And snow and hail and stormy gust and *flaw*. — *Paradise Lost*.

It is still used by English seamen, and Tennyson also uses it :—

Like *flaws* in summer laying lusty corn.

Frore, for froze or frozen. This is used by Milton :—

The parching air
Burns *frore* and cold performs the effect of fire.

Glutch, to swallow. "My throat is so sore that I cannot *glutch* anything." Wright gives it as old English in the same sense, and adds the word *glutcher*, as meaning the throat.

Gulch. The dictionaries give the similar word *gulch* as an obsolete word, which meant to swallow ravenously, and Wright gives it as Westmoreland for to swallow. In this sense I do not hear of its being used in Newfoundland. As a noun it is used as in other parts of America, as denoting a ravine or small hollow. It is also applied to those hollows made by vehicles in snow roads, known in Canada as *itches*. But as a verb it has come, on the Labrador coast, to have a meaning peculiar to that region and to those who frequent it. In summer, men, women, and children from Newfoundland spend some weeks there at the fishing, living in a very promiscuous way. As there is no tree for shelter for hundreds of miles of islands and shores, parties resort to the hollows for secret indulgence. Hence gulching has, among them, become a synonym for living a wanton life.

Hat, a quantity, a bunch, or a heap. A hat of trees means a clump of trees. According to Jamieson's "Scottish Dictionary," in some parts of Scotland the word means a small heap of any kind, carelessly thrown together.

Heft, as a verb, to raise up, but especially to prove or try the weight of a thing by raising it, is marked in dictionaries as Provincial English and Colloquial United States, but it is still used in the same sense in Newfoundland. Thus one returning home with a good basket of fish may say to a friend, "heft that," feel the weight of it. And so, as a noun, it is used with the relative meaning of weight.

House place, the kitchen. In old English, according to Wright, it meant the hall, the first large room after entering the house. It is still in common use in Scotland.

Fonnick, in Newfoundland, means honest, but according to Wright, in the Northamptonshire dialect it means "kind or hospitable."

Kilter, regular order or condition ; "out of kilter," disordered or disarranged. It is common in old English, but generally spelled *kelter*. Thus Barrow says, "If the organs of prayer be *out of kelter*, or out of tune, how can we pray ?" Under the spelling "kilter" it is common in New England.

Knap, a knoll or protuberance above surrounding land. It appears in Anglo-Saxon as *knappe*, and in kindred languages as denoting a knob or button, but in old English it denotes "the top of a hill or a rising ground" (Wright).

Linney, a small building built against a bank or another building. In New England it is generally *linter* or *lenter*. This is commonly regarded as a corruption of *lean-to*. But Eggleston, in an article in the "Century Magazine" for April, 1894, doubts this. At all events, Wright gives *linhay* as, in the Westmoreland dialect, denoting an open shed. In this form, also, it appears in "Lorna Doone," a novel written in the Devonshire dialect.

Mare-browed. The word *mare*, in Anglo-Saxon, means a demon or goblin, and we have a remnant of this in the word "nightmare." But there is in Newfoundland a curious survival of it in the term *mare-browed*, applied to a man whose eyebrows extend across his forehead, and who is dreaded as possessed of supernatural powers.

Mouch, to play truant, and also applied to one shirking work or duty. This is the same old English word, variously spelled *meech*, *meach*, and *miche*, to lie hid or to skulk, hence to cower or to be servilely humble or mean. The form *mouch* is still retained in the North of Ireland, and is also common in Scotland. I lately observed it as used by the tramps in New York to denote concealing or disguising one's self. I find it also used by schoolboys in some places in Nova Scotia.

Nunch, the refreshment men take with them on going to the woods. It is an old form of the word "lunch," as "nuncheon" for "luncheon" (Wright). It is said, in old English, to denote a thick lump of bread or other edible. But by others it is regarded, we think not so probably, as referring to noon, and meaning the refreshment that the laborers partook of at that hour.

Then a Newfoundlander speaks of his head as his *poll*. Elsewhere the word is only used in reference to numbering persons, as for poll tax, or holding a poll. Shakespeare, however, uses it in its original signification, — "All flaxen was his poll."

Peek, to peep, common in New England. Thus we have in Lowell's poems : —

Zekle crep' up, quite unbeknown,
An' *peeked* in thru the winder.

Pook, a haycock. Wright gives it as having the same meaning in the Westmoreland dialect.

Prong, a hay or fish fork. This is the meaning given by Johnson, who does not mention it as denoting one tine of a fork. So Wright gives it as an old English word denoting a hayfork.

Putter along, an old English form, still in use in New England, for "potter," to walk languidly, or labor inefficiently.

Rampike, a dead spruce or pine tree still standing. It is used in the same sense by the lumbermen of the Maritime Provinces, and probably of New England. It is probably the same as the old English word *rampick*, an adjective "applied to the bough of a tree which has lesser branches standing out at its extremity" (Wright).

Ram's horn, a wooden pound for washing fish in. But Wright gives it as a Somerset word, denoting a sort of net to inclose fish that come in with the tide.

Randy is used, both as a noun and a verb, of the amusement of coasting. "Give us a randy," or "The boys are randying." In Anglo-Saxon it means boisterous, and "on the randy" meant living in debauchery. The word is retained in Scotland, where it means a romp or frolic, but generally in an unfavorable sense. The dictionaries, however, give *random*, both as a noun and a verb, in old English and old French, as denoting rapid and violent motion, or going at random.

Robustious is an old English word used by Milton, the same in meaning as "robust," originally used in a favorable sense, but coming to mean violent and unruly. Hence it became a term of reproach, and finally fell out of use. But the Newfoundlanders still use it, or the similar word *robustic*, in its original favorable signification.

Scred, a piece or fragment, seems the same as "shred," the Anglo-Saxon *screde*. Webster gives Provincial English *screed*.

Seeming, judgment or opinion. Given by Johnson and Webster as obsolete, but used by the best writers of the past. Thus Milton has :—

The persuasive words impregnd
With reason to her *seeming*.

And Hooker says :—

Nothing more clear to their *seeming*.

In Newfoundland the sled or sleigh of the Continent, the sledge of the English, is called a *slide*, but according to Wright this is the original form in old English. *Shard* is used, as in Shakespeare's time, to denote broken pieces of pottery.

Spancel, a noun, denoting "a rope to tie a cow's hind legs," and a verb, "to tie with a rope." By Webster it is given as Provincial English, and an English gentleman informs me that the word is still common in Yorkshire.

Strouters, the outside piles of a wharf, which are larger and stronger than the inner ones, which are called *shores*. According to Wright, in Somerset dialect it denotes "anything that projects."

Starve, viz., with cold or frost. I have heard the same in Nova Scotia. Johnson gives it as a verb neuter, with one of its meanings, "to be killed with cold," and as active, with the meaning to "kill with cold," and quotes Milton's line : —

From beds of raging fire to *starve* in ice.

Webster gives this meaning as common in England, but not in the United States, though he quotes W. Irving as writing "*starving* with cold as well as hunger."

Tilt, a log-house such as lumberers use ; a rough, temporary shelter, like a shanty in Canada, only, instead of being built of logs laid horizontally one on the other, it is usually composed of spruce or fir sticks placed vertically and covered with bark. In Anglo-Saxon it appears as *telt* and *telde*, from *telden*, to cover. According to the dictionaries, from Johnson onward, it is used to denote a tent, an awning or canopy, as over a boat.

Troth plight, one espoused or affianced. So Shakespeare : —

This your son-in-law
Is *troth plight* to your daughter. — *Winter's Tale*.

Tussock, a bunch or tuft of grass, is marked in the dictionaries as obsolete, but it is still in use in Newfoundland to denote the matted tufts of grass found on the bogs.

It is well known that the word *girl* is not found in the Anglo-Saxon or other languages of the North of Europe, and that it only occurs in two places in the authorized English version of the Bible, showing that it was then only beginning to be introduced into English. In Newfoundland it is only where the people have been intermixed with persons from other quarters that it has been used, and in more remote places it is perhaps not used yet, the word "maid," pronounced m'y-id, being almost universally employed instead.

A number of words are pronounced so differently as to seem to be almost different words. Thus "seal" is pronounced as if written *swile*, a sealer is a *swiler*, and seal hunting is *swile* hunting. A hoe is a *how*, the fir is *var*, snuffing is *snoffing*, and "never" is *naar*, which is equivalent to "not," "naar a bit" being a favorite expression to denote a strong negative.

There are also remains of old English usage in their use of the pronouns. Thus every object is spoken of as either masculine or feminine, and has either "he" or "she" applied to it. "It" seems only to be used where it has been acquired by intercourse with others. A man speaking of his head will say "he aches." Entering the court-house, I heard a witness asked to describe a cod-trap that was in dispute. He immediately replied, "*He* was about seventy-five fathoms long," etc. Other objects are spoken of as "she," not

only boats and vessels, but a locomotive. I see no principle upon which the distinction is made. But of this old usage we have a remnant in the universal use of the feminine for ships.

Another old form still common is the use of the singular *thee* and *thou* instead of the plural *you*. With this is joined what is still common in parts of England,—the use of the nominative for the objective, and to some extent the reverse.

Some peculiarities may be noticed also in the formation of the past tense of verbs. Thus the present *save* has the past *sove*, and *dive* is *dove*. But the very general usage is to follow the old English practice of adding “ed.” Thus they say *runned* for ran, *sid* for saw, *hurted* for hurt, *falled* for fell, *comed* for came, even *sen’d* for sent, and *goed* for went. This last, however, is true English, retained in Scotland in *gaed*, while *went* does not belong to the verb at all, but is the past of another verb to wend. More curious still is the use of *doned* for did or done.

The use of the letter *a*, as a prefix to participles or participial nouns, to express an action still going on, is still retained; as, a-walking, a-hunting, etc.

Again, in some places there is retained in some words the sound of *e* at the end where it is now omitted in English. Thus “hand” and “hands” are pronounced as if written “handè” and “handès.” This is old English. We find it in Coverdale’s version of the Bible, Tyndale’s New Testament, which, however, sometimes has “honde” and “hondes,” and Cranmer’s. The same usage appears in some other words, but I do not know to what extent it prevails.

The word or syllable *am* is affixed seemingly only as an expletive, perhaps for the purpose of emphasis. My conjecture is that it is a corruption of the word *same*. Thus “*thisam*” and “*thesam*” were probably originally “this same” and “these same.”

A number of words written with *ay*, and with most English-speaking people having the long sound of *a*, are in Newfoundland sounded as if written with a *y*. Thus they say w’y, aw’y, pr’y, pr’yer, b’y for way, away, pray, prayer, bay. So n’yebor for neighbor. This pronunciation is still retained in Scotland, and R. Lowell refers to it as in Chaucer, and quotes it as an example of the *lastingness* of linguistic peculiarities.

In their names of objects of natural history we find the retention of a number of old English words. Thus whortleberries or blueberries are called *hurts*, nearly the same as the old English whurts or whorts, marked in the dictionaries as obsolete. Then they call a flea a *lop*, the Anglo-Saxon *loppe*, from *lope*, to leap; and wasps they call *waps*, which is the same with the Anglo-Saxon *waps* and the Low German *wepsh*. A large vicious fly is called *stout*, but accord-

ing to Wright this is the Westmoreland name for the gadfly. Then the snipe is called a *snite*, which is the old English form: "The witless woodcock and his neighbor *snite*." (Drayton's "Owl.") Earthworms are termed *yesses*, which Wright gives as Dorsetshire, and which is found in dictionaries as late as Walker's.

Some names are retained, but altered in form or differently applied. Thus *grebe* seems unquestionably the same word as *grebe*; but it is used in Newfoundland to denote the sea eagle, while the original word is used to denote certain kinds of waterfowl. Then *stoat* is used for *shoat*, a young pig, and the American brown thrush or robin is called the *blackbird*.

They have a number of other names whose origin I cannot trace, some of which may have originated among themselves, but most of which were probably brought with them. Thus the medusæ, or sea-nettles, are called *squidsquads*, sometimes *squidsqualls*; the echinus or sea-urchin, *ox eggs*; freshwater clams, *cocks and hens*; and to the westward smelts are known as *ministers*. The black fly is known as the *mosquito*, and the mosquito as the *nipper*.

II. A number of English words are used in peculiar senses, and it is often interesting to trace the process of the change. Perhaps in this respect the stranger is most frequently struck by the use of the words *plant* and *planter*. He reads of administration of the estate of A. B., planter, or sees the name of C. D., planter, as a candidate for the legislature, and he hears the words in connection with all their fishing operations. A planter is a man who undertakes fishing on his own account, a sort of middleman between the merchants and the fishermen. He owns or charters a vessel, obtains all supplies from the merchants, hires the men, deals with them, superintends the fishing, and on his return deals with the merchants for the fruits of the adventure. A man will speak of going on a plant, that is, going fishing on his own account. On the West Coast, a man who owns a boat and hires another man is called a small planter.

It is easy to see the origin of this. When England began to plant colonies, they were called plantations, and those who formed them were called planters. In general they were really engaged in cultivating the soil, as the planters of Jamaica, the planters of Virginia, etc. But in Newfoundland the settlers or planters had, indeed, land assigned them, but for a length of time only for carrying on their fishing, but they still retained the name of planters.

The word *clever*, it is well known, is used in different senses in England and New England. In the former it expresses mental power, and means talented or skilful; in the latter it describes the disposition, and means generous or good-natured. In Newfoundland it is used in quite a distinct sense. It there means large and hand-

some. It is applied not only to men, but to animals and inanimate things. A fisherman will speak of a "clever-built boat," meaning that it is large and shapely. The dictionaries, from Johnson onward, give, as one meaning of the word, "well-shaped or handsome." But he describes it as "a low word, scarcely ever used but in burlesque or in conversation, and applied to anything a man likes, without a settled meaning." But Wright gives it as in the East of England meaning good-looking, and in Lancashire as denoting lusty, which is nearly the Newfoundland idea, and probably the nearest to the old English.

Sign, in the phrase "a sign of," is used to denote a small quantity. One at table, being asked if he would have any more of a dish, replied, "Just a sign." This I have no doubt originated in the use of the term on the fishing grounds in something of its proper meaning. When, on reaching them and seeking spots where the fish were to be found, they first caught some, it afforded a sign of their presence, just as a gold-miner speaks of a "show" of gold. When they caught them in greater abundance, they spoke of it as "a *good* sign of fish." Hence the term came to express the quantity, without reference to what it indicated, and in this sense to be applied to any object.

Atert, or *atort*, is the same as *athwart*, but it is used as equivalent to *across*. Thus they say "atert the road," or "atort the harbor." *Tert* is also used for *thwart*.

Bread, with a Newfoundlander, means hard biscuit, and soft-baked bread is called *loaf*. The origin of this is easily understood. For a length of time the coast was frequented by fishermen, who made no permanent settlement on shore, and whose only bread was hard biscuit. In a similar way fish came to mean codfish.

"*Going into the country*" is used to express going into the woods. A man going for an outing, taking a tent to encamp in the woods, will be said to have gone into the country. We can easily understand how this could have arisen. In Newfoundland there are really no settlers or settlements away from the shore. Therefore to go into the country is in reality to go into the woods. On the other hand, the people of St. Johns speak of persons coming in from the outposts as "coming *out of* the country." We find the same form in the authorized version of the English Bible (Mark xv. 21), where the Revised has simply "coming *from* the country."

The word *fodder* is not used to denote cattle-feed in general, but is limited to oats cut green to be used for that purpose. This use of the word, I am informed, is found in New England. So the words *funnel* and *funnelling* are used in Newfoundland, and also in some parts of the United States, for stove-pipe. It is common in both to

hear such expressions as "The funnels are wrong," or "He bought so many feet of funnelling." This sense of the word has gone out of use elsewhere, except as regards a steamer's funnel.

Hatchet is used for an axe. This is a little singular, as the word was not originally English, but is the French *hachette*, the diminutive of *hache*, and really meaning a small axe or hatchet.

A Newfoundlander cannot pass you a higher compliment than to say you are a *knowledgable* man. This word, however, I understand is common in Ireland, and I suppose was brought here by the Irish settlers.

Liveyers, a name applied by the Newfoundland fishermen to those who permanently reside on the Labrador coast, in contrast with those who come there during summer. It seems simply the word *livers*, but curiously altered in the pronunciation.

Lodge is used in an active transitive sense, as equivalent to place or put, as "I lodged the book on the shelf," "She lodged the dish in the closet." This was the original meaning of the word, but this use of it in common life has almost entirely ceased. We have, however, a survival of it in such expressions as, "lodging money in the bank."

Marsh, often pronounced *mesh* or *mish*, is the usual name for a bog, of which there are many throughout the island. So *pond* is the name for a lake. Even the largest on the island (fifty-six miles long) is known as Grand Pond. This usage prevails to some extent in New England, where, however, both terms are used without any clear distinction between them, but in Newfoundland "pond" alone is used. In this connection it may be also noted that a rapid in a river is usually known as a *rattle*. I do not find this elsewhere, but I regard it as very expressive.

Model, sometimes pronounced *morel*, is used in general for a pattern. Thus a person entering a shop asked for "cloth of that model," exhibiting a small piece.

Ralls, a word applied to riots that took place some years ago. Robert Lowell, in his work, "The New Priest of Conception Bay," supposes that the word means "*rallies*," but Judge Bennett informs me that it is a corruption of "radicals," and was applied to those engaged in these disturbances as enemies to civil and ecclesiastical authorities.

Rind, as a noun, is invariably used to denote the bark of a tree, and, as a verb, to strip it off. The word *bark*, on the other hand, is only used as a noun to denote the tan which the fisherman applies to his net and sails, and as a verb to denote such an application of it. Thus he will say, "I have been getting some juniper or black spruce *rind* to make tan *bark*," or "I have been *barking* my net or sails," meaning that he has been applying the tannin extract to them.

One of the most singular peculiarities, however, of the dialect of Newfoundlanders is the use of the word *room* to denote the whole premises of a merchant, planter, or fisherman. On the principal harbors, the land on the shore was granted in small sections, measuring so many yards in front, and running back two or three hundred yards, with a lane between. Each of these allotments was called a *room*, and, according to the way in which it was employed, was known as a merchant's room, a planter's room, or a fisherman's room. Thus we will hear of Mr. M.'s upper room, his lower room, and his beach room; or we have Mr. H.'s room, the place where he does business, at Labrador. One of these places, descending from father to son, will be called a family room.

Shall, probably the same as *shell*, but we find it as *shale* used by older writers. Johnson defines it as "a husk, the case of seeds in siliquous plants," quoting Shakespeare's line, "Leaving them but the *shales* and husks of men," and later writers use it as a verb to denote the stripping off this husk. In Newfoundland it is used in both ways, and in addition to denote the hulling of strawberries and such fruit.

The word *skipper* is in universal use, and so commonly applied as almost to have lost its original meaning of the master of a small vessel. It is used toward every person whom one wishes to address with respect, and is almost as common as "Mr." is elsewhere. Generally the Christian name is used after it, as Skipper Jan, Skipper Kish. In like manner the word *uncle* is used without regard to relationship. In a community every respectable man of say sixty years of age will be so called by all the other people in it.

Spurt, meaning a short time. "Excuse me for a spurt." "How long did you stay?" "A short spurt."

Having much to do with the weather, as might be expected, they have peculiar words and expressions regarding it. Thus a calm day is *civil*, and a stormy one is *coarse*. This last I think I have heard among Scotch people. A very sharp, cutting wind driving small particles of ice, which strike the face in a painful manner, is expressively called a *barber*. A Newfoundlander will also speak of the wind being *scant* when it may be blowing something of a gale. He means that it is too nearly ahead for him to make the course which he wishes. I find, however, the same use of the word among seamen in Nova Scotia. This I think must be a corruption of the word *askant*. From this perhaps comes the word *scantalize* or *scandalize*. A gentleman heard a captain, on bringing a vessel to anchor, give an order to "scantalize the mainsail." The command was obeyed by letting the peak drop and gathering up the sail as far as was necessary to take the wind out of it. The word, however, does not appear to be in common use.

It will be seen that several of the old English words in use in Newfoundland are also found in New England. The question has been raised, whether each derived them from their common English parentage, or whether the Newfoundlanders received them by intercourse with New England fishermen visiting their coast. I am decidedly of opinion that most if not all the old English words used in Newfoundland were an original importation from the mother country. The intercourse of New England fishermen was too limited and too transient to have so generally affected their language. Still there are a few words in use which seem to have come in that way, for example *callibogus*, a mixture of spruce beer and rum; a *scalawag*, a scamp; *tomahawk*, the name by which the American shingling hatchet is known; *catamaran*, a word originally denoting a raft of three logs lashed together, used first in the East and afterward in the West Indies, but in Newfoundland used to denote a wood-sled, and, when side sleighs were first introduced, applied to them; and *scrod*, in New England *escrod*, a fresh young codfish broiled.

III. There are a large number of words the origin of which is to me unknown or uncertain. Thus a species of white bean is advertised commonly and sold under the name of *callivances*. Eggleston, in an article in the "Century Magazine" for 1894, mentions "*gallivances* and potatoes" as given in 1782 among the products of Pennsylvania; and in the same year, in "A Complete Discovery of the State of Carolina," a list is made of several sorts of pulse grown in the colony, to wit, "beans, pease, *callavances*," etc. He is puzzled about the word, and supposes it to mean pumpkins, and to be from the Spanish *calabaza* (gourd). But this would not be pulse. Probably it meant there, as it does now in Newfoundland, the small white bean, in contrast with the broad English bean. But what is the origin of the word, and how did it come to be found in places so distant, and circumstances so different, as in Carolina and Newfoundland? And is it not singular to find it surviving in the latter place, when it has so entirely disappeared elsewhere that the learned are unable to ascertain its meaning?

Of other words of to me unknown origin I may mention *chronic*, an old stump; *cockeying* at Harbor Grace, *copying* in St. Johns, describing an amusement of boys in spring, when the ice is breaking up, of jumping from cake to cake, in supposed imitation of the sealers; *cracky*, a little dog; *dido*, a bitch; *gandy*, the fisherman's name for a pancake; *mucksy*, muddy, doubtless from muck, but I do not find it in any dictionary within my reach; ¹ *scrape*, a rough road down the

¹ Since the above was written, I observe that the author of *Lorna Doone* gives "muck" and "mucksy" as Devonshire for mud and muddy.

face of a bank or steep hill, used specially in regard to such as are formed by sliding or hauling logs down ; *shimmick*, used on the west coast as a term of contempt for one who, born of English parents, attempts to conceal or deny his birth in Newfoundland ; *sprayed*, describing chapped hands or arms ; *tolt*, a solitary hill, usually somewhat conical, rising by itself above the surrounding country ; *truckly-muck*, a small two-handed car for dogs, with a handle for a man to keep it straight ; and *tuckamore*, in some places *tuckamil*, a clump of spruce, growing almost flat on the ground and matted together, found on the barrens and bleak, exposed places.

To these may be added the following words : *droke*, *e. g.* of wood, denoting a wood extending from one side of a valley to the other. In old English the word denotes a filmy weed on the surface of stagnant waters, but I cannot trace any connection of this with the use of it in Newfoundland.

Dwy, a mist or slight shower. "Is it going to rain to-day ?" "No, it is only a dwy," a Newfoundlander may reply.

Starrigan, a young fir-tree, which is neither good for firewood nor large enough to be used for timber, hence applied with contempt to anything constructed of unsuitable materials. The word sounds as if it were from the Irish.

Sprawls of snow, heavy drifts ; the origin and proper meaning of the word I am unable to trace.

Under this head we may also notice a number of technical terms connected with their fishing, which may be used by fishermen elsewhere, but of most of which I am unable to trace the origin. Thus we have *collar*, a mooring laid down for the purpose of fastening the fishing punt or skiff to it : the rope has a loop at the end for pulling over the stern of the boat, and this rope gives its name to the mooring ; *faggots*, small piles of fish on the flakes ; *high rat*, a boat with a board along the edge to prevent the water coming over, called a *washboard*, a term applied to objects which have a similar arrangement ; thus a man boarding in town complained that he had to sleep in a bed without any washboard ; *pew*, an instrument consisting of a shaft with a sharp piece of iron, like one prong of a fork, at the end of it, used for throwing fish from the boats on to the stages, hence the verb *to pew*, to cast them up in this manner, but this seems to be the French word *pieu*, which is defined as meaning a stake or pale, but which I am informed is used by the French Canadians to denote a fork ; *rode*, the hemp cable by which the vessel, boat, or punt rides on the fishing ground ; *swatching*, watching open holes in the ice for seals to come up to shoot them ; and *water-horse*, a pile of fish after being washed, usually three or four feet wide, about the same height, and as long as may be.

The hunting of seals on the ice has produced a number of technical words which seem peculiar to that employment. Thus a cake of ice is uniformly known as a *pan* of ice, and *to pan* is to gather at one place a quantity say of seals. This last, however, seems a survival of an obsolete English word meaning to join or close together. Ice ground fine is known as *swish ice*, but broken into larger pieces it is called *slob ice*. Large cakes of ice like small icebergs floating about are called *growlers*; and when, by the pressure of sea and storm, the ice is piled in layers one upon the other, it is said to be *rafted*. The process of separating the skin with the fat adhering to it from the rest of the carcass is called *sculping*, and the part thus separated is called the *sculp*.

Like all uneducated people, Newfoundlanders have phrases, or a sort of proverbial expressions, based on the circumstances of their daily life, which are frequently very telling. Thus they will describe a simpleton or greenhorn as "not well-baked" or only "half-baked." They will also describe a man as having "a slate off," indicating the same as is meant by a man having something wrong in his upper story. This saying was doubtless brought with them from the old country; but as slates are not used among them for the covering of houses, they have adapted the saying to the country by speaking of such a man as having "a shingle loose." An increase of cold may be described as the weather being "a jacket colder," and when feeling its severity they will speak of being "nipped with cold." Again, a man describing his poverty said he had had nothing to eat but "a bare-legged herring," meaning a herring without anything to eat with it. But one of the most amusing uses of a word is that of "miserable," simply as intensive. Thus a person will speak of "a miserable fine day." I believe that similar words are used in a similar manner, and that one may be described as "terrible good."

George Patterson.

NEW GLASGOW, NOVA SCOTIA.